

**OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2003

Media contact: Melanie Wilt, ODA Communications, 614-752-9817

Gypsy Moth Treatment Planned for Cincinnati

REYNOLDSBURG – The Ohio Department of Agriculture will target thirteen areas in southern and southwest Ohio, including Cincinnati, for a treatment designed to slow the spread of the destructive gypsy moth across the state. To help educate local residents about this type of treatment program, ODA will host an open house on April 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the LeBlonde Community Center, 233 Eastern Ave, where residents can talk directly with the department's plant pest control staff and view displays about the moth and maps of local treatment sites.*

The treatment uses a pheromone flake specific to the gypsy moth to disrupt mating – but it is not harmful to humans, animals, or other insects. This year, a total of 16,675 acres across the state will be treated. It was used last year on 32,974 acres in areas of Clark, Pike, Ross, and Scioto counties. This year, the areas to be treated include 1,000 acres in Cincinnati, 825 acres near Trenton in Butler county, 1,200 acres in Clark County, 2,775 acres in Greene County, 1,750 acres near Ironton in Lawrence County, 6,850 acres in Pike County, 825 acres in Ross County, and 1,450 acres in Scioto County.

In addition, 400 acres in Findlay and 450 acres near Jeffersonville in Fayette County will receive treatments of Dimilin.

The gypsy moth is a non-native, invasive species that has been advancing into Ohio from Pennsylvania and Michigan over the last several years. In its caterpillar stage, it feeds on the leaves of trees and shrubs and is especially fond of oak. A healthy tree can usually withstand only two years of defoliation before it is permanently damaged or dies.

The agriculture department operates two programs aimed at managing the gypsy moth in Ohio – the “Suppression” program in counties where the pest is established and the “Slow-the-Spread” program in counties not yet infested by the moth, like the counties mentioned above. Each May, the suppression program coordinates aerial treatments of wooded areas at risk to damage from gypsy moth feeding at the request of residents. This program is voluntary. To date, 43 of Ohio's 88 counties have established gypsy moth populations. The focus of the “Slow-the-Spread” program, as implemented in the above counties, is to detect and eradicate isolated populations which helps slow the gypsy moths' movement across the remaining half of Ohio.

Another result of the gypsy moth's march across Ohio is isolated outbreaks outside infested counties, like in the areas to be treated in southern and southwest Ohio. In these Slow-the-Spread areas, ODA will use pheromone flakes to change the behavior of the adult moth. Pheromones are chemicals produced by insects to communicate. The pheromone is incorporated into plastic laminated flakes that are mixed with a sticking agent and released from an airplane. The flakes are green and are approximately the size of this character: —. The sticking agent is not strong, but will ensure the pheromone is distributed at all levels in the forest where gypsy moths may live. If the flakes land on cars or patio furniture, they can easily be wiped or washed off.

Once the flakes are released, they saturate the air in the treated area with the pheromone for 2 to 3 months, disrupting the communication between the female and male gypsy moth. The pheromone flake release in mid June is timed to correspond with the male gypsy moth's flight, preventing him from finding the flightless female and mating.

*These are open house-style meetings, so residents may visit any time during the hours listed.